

The following was extracted from BLM Technical Note 422 “Roads and Trails Terminology”, November 2006.

Introduction

Access to public lands is crucial for the effective use and stewardship of those lands. The Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) extensive transportation system provides the basis for access to the BLM’s 261.8 million acres and supports all of the BLM’s Strategic Goals as the “backbone” for administrative, commercial, and recreational use.

Because of the wide range of needs and uses, the BLM’s routes represent a broad spectrum of linear features—from engineered roadways with asphalt surfaces through challenging trails accessible only to nonmotorized traffic. Inherent in the wide range of uses and “customers” is a varied vocabulary used to describe the linear features that includes roads, trails, paths, routes, and a host of derivatives of the basic terms. All of these terms have meaning and context within their respective programs but, when used collectively, often conflict and lead to confusion caused by the use of the same term to describe very different physical features.

The development of a consistent set of terms and definitions for use across the BLM is an essential first step to comprehensive travel management. By establishing a common set of terms and definitions, the foundation is established for effective interchange of management needs and information within and across programs. Standard terms and definitions also allow the BLM to communicate efficiently and consistently with customers and stakeholders.

Purpose

The purpose of the Roads and Trails Terminology report is to establish strategic direction and consistent terminology used by the recreation, planning, National Science and Technology Center (NSTC), National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), lands, property, and engineering groups to manage the BLM transportation system in activities such as planning, inventorying, designating, mapping, signing, monitoring, developing public information, maintaining, assessing condition, tracking, and reporting data so ongoing alignment of present and future strategic comprehensive travel management and transportation objectives can be achieved.

Objectives

A specific objective of this report is to:

- 1) Establish BLM definitions for the many different types of roads, trails, and other associated terms (e.g., maintenance levels) that are used when managing these assets. Linear features may include roads and trails identified for closure or removal, as well as those that make up the BLM’s defined transportation system.

For clarity and a consistent understanding, the following terms were established by the Roads and Trails Terminology Team:

- **Transportation Linear Features**—“Linear features” represents the broadest category of physical disturbance (planned and unplanned) on BLM land. Transportation related linear features include engineered roads and trails, as well as user-defined, nonengineered roads and trails created as a result of the public use of BLM land.

- **Transportation System**—The “transportation system” represents the sum of the BLM’s recognized inventory of linear features (roads, primitive roads, and trails) formally recognized, designated, and approved as part of the BLM’s transportation system.

- **Routes**—“Routes” represents a group or set of roads, trails, and primitive roads that represents less than 100% of the BLM transportation system. Generically, components of the transportation system are described as routes.

- **Roads, Trails, and Primitive Roads**—These terms describe specific categories of transportation linear features and represent subsets of the BLM’s transportation system.

- **Transportation Linear Disturbances**—“Linear disturbances” is used to identify human-made linear features that are not part of the BLM’s transportation system. Linear disturbances may include engineered (planned) as well as unplanned single and two-track linear features that are not part of the BLM’s transportation system. The use of consistent terminology is at the heart of many of the issues identified by the Roads and Trails Terminology Team. The Proposed Comprehensive Travel Management Terminology Hierarchy (Figure 1) provides an organizational context for the linear features that exist on BLM land. Generally, those linear features are described in two categories: transportation system and transportation linear disturbances representing the human-made linear features that are not part of the transportation system.

Terms, Definitions, and Maintenance Standards

DEFINITIONS:

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM LINEAR FEATURES (ASSETS):

Road: A linear route declared a road by the owner, managed for use by low-clearance vehicles having four or more wheels, and maintained for regular and continuous use.

Primitive Road: A linear route managed for use by four-wheel drive or high-clearance vehicles. These routes do not normally meet any BLM road design standards.

Trail: A linear route managed for human-powered, stock, or off-highway vehicle forms of transportation or for historical or heritage values. Trails are not generally managed for use by four-wheel drive or high-clearance vehicles.

OTHER TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT:

Assets—Term used to describe roads, primitive roads, and trails that comprise the transportation system. Also the general term used to describe all BLM-constructed “Assets” contained within the Facility Asset Management System (FAMS).

Closed Area—An area where off-highway vehicle use is prohibited. Use of off-highway vehicles in closed areas may be allowed for certain reasons; however, such use shall be made only with the approval of the authorized officer.

Comprehensive Travel Management—The proactive interdisciplinary planning, on-the-ground management, and administration of travel networks (both motorized and nonmotorized) to ensure that public access, natural resources, and regulatory needs are considered. It consists of inventory, planning, designation, implementation, education, enforcement, monitoring, easement acquisition, mapping and signing, and other measures necessary for providing access to public lands for a wide variety of uses (including uses for recreational, traditional, casual, agricultural, commercial, educational, and other purposes).

Designated Roads and Trails—Specific roads and trails identified by the BLM (or other agencies) where some type of motorized vehicle use is appropriate and allowed either seasonally or yearlong. (BLM Manual H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook)

Limited Area—An area restricted at certain times, in certain areas, or to certain vehicular use. These restrictions may be of any type but can generally be accommodated within the following categories: Numbers of vehicles; types of vehicles; time or season of vehicle use; permitted or licensed use only; use on existing roads and trails; use on designated roads and trails; and other restrictions.

Maintenance Intensities–Transportation System Assets—BLM Route Maintenance Intensities provide guidance for appropriate “standards of care” to recognized routes within the BLM. Recognized Routes by definition include Roads, Primitive Roads, and Trails carried as Assets within the Bureau of Land Management Facility Asset Management System (FAMS).

Maintenance Intensities provide consistent objectives and standards for the care and maintenance of BLM routes according to identified management objectives. Maintenance Intensities are consistent with land-use planning management objectives (for example, natural, cultural, recreation setting and visual). Maintenance Intensities provide operational guidance to field personnel on the appropriate intensity, frequency, and type of maintenance activities that should be undertaken to keep the route in acceptable

condition and provide guidance for the minimum standards of care for the annual maintenance of a route.

Maintenance Intensities do not describe route geometry, types of route, types of use, or other physical or managerial characteristics of the route. Those items are addressed as other descriptive attributes to a route. Maintenance Intensities provide a range of objectives and standards, from “identification for removal” through frequent and intensive maintenance.

Level 0	<p>Maintenance Description: Existing routes that will no longer be maintained or declared as routes. Routes identified as Level 0 are identified for removal from the Transportation System entirely.</p> <p>Maintenance Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No planned annual maintenance• Meet identified environmental needs• No preventive maintenance or planned annual maintenance activities <p>Maintenance Funds: No annual maintenance funds</p>
Level 1	<p>Maintenance Description: Routes where minimal (low-intensity) maintenance is required to protect adjacent lands and resource values. These roads may be impassable for extended periods of time.</p> <p>Maintenance Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low (Minimal) maintenance intensity• Emphasis is given to maintaining drainage and runoff patterns as needed to protect adjacent lands. Grading, brushing, or slide removal is not performed unless route bed drainage is being adversely affected, causing erosion.• Meet identified resource management objectives• Perform maintenance as necessary to protect adjacent lands and resource values• No preventive maintenance• Planned maintenance activities limited to environmental and resource protection• Route surface and other physical features are not maintained for regular traffic. <p>Maintenance Funds: Maintenance funds provided to address environmental and resource protection requirements. No maintenance funds provided to perform preventive maintenance.</p>
Level 2	<p><i>RESERVED FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE USE</i></p>

Level 3

Maintenance Description: Routes requiring moderate maintenance because of low-volume use (e.g., seasonally or year-round for commercial, recreational, or administrative access). Maintenance Intensities may not provide year-round access, but are intended to generally provide resources appropriate for keeping the route in use for the majority of the year.

Maintenance Objectives:

- Medium (Moderate) maintenance intensity
- Drainage structures will be maintained as needed. Surface maintenance will be conducted to provide a reasonable level of riding comfort at prudent speeds for the route conditions and intended use. Brushing is conducted as needed to improve sight distance when appropriate for management uses. Landslides adversely affecting drainage receive high priority for removal; otherwise, they will be removed on a scheduled basis.
- Meet identified environmental needs
- Generally maintained for year-round traffic
- Perform annual maintenance necessary to protect adjacent lands and resource values
- Perform preventive maintenance as required to generally keep the route in acceptable condition
- Planned maintenance activities should include environmental and resource protection efforts, annual route surface
- Route surface and other physical features are maintained for regular traffic

Maintenance Funds: Maintenance funds provided to preserve the route in the present condition perform planned preventive maintenance activities on a scheduled basis, and address environmental and resource protection requirements.

Level 4

RESERVED FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE USE

Level 5

Maintenance Description: Routes for high (Maximum) maintenance because of year-round needs, high-volume traffic, or significant use. Also may include routes identified through management objectives as requiring high intensities of maintenance or to be maintained open year-round.

Maintenance Objectives:

- High (Maximum) maintenance intensity
- The entire route will be maintained at least annually. Problems will be repaired as discovered. These routes may be closed or have limited access because of weather conditions but are generally intended for year round use.
- Meet identified environmental needs

- Generally maintained for year-round traffic
- Perform annual maintenance necessary to protect adjacent lands and resource values
- Perform preventive maintenance as required to generally keep the route in acceptable condition
 - Planned maintenance activities should include environmental and resource protection efforts, annual route surface
 - Route surface and other physical features are maintained for regular traffic

Maintenance Funds: Maintenance funds provided to preserve the route in the present condition perform planned preventive maintenance activities on a scheduled basis, and address environmental and resource protection requirements.

Off-Highway Vehicle (off-road vehicle)—Any motorized vehicle capable of—or designated for—travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding: (1) any nonamphibious registered motorboat; (2) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (3) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer, or otherwise officially approved; (4) vehicles in official use; and (5) any combat or combat support vehicle when used for national defense.

Open Area—An area where all types of vehicle use is permitted at all times, anywhere in the area subject to the operating regulations and vehicle standards set forth in 43 CFR 8341 and 8342.

Transportation Linear Disturbances—Human-made linear features that are not part of the BLM’s Transportation System. Linear disturbances may include engineered (planned), as well as unplanned single- and two-track linear features.

Transportation Linear Features—The broadest category of physical disturbance (planned and unplanned) on BLM land. Transportation-related linear features include engineered roads and trails, as well as user-defined, nonengineered roads and trails created as a result of the public use of BLM land. May include roads and trails identified for closure or removal, as well as those that make up the BLM’s defined transportation system.

Transportation Plan—A transportation facility plan shown on forms and maps of all existing and planned access routes needed to use, protect, and administer the public lands. (Preparation of the transportation plan does not depend on RMPs; but as they are completed, the transportation plan should be revised to reflect changes.) (BLM Manual 9100—Engineering)

Transportation System—The sum of the BLM’s recognized inventory of linear features (roads, primitive roads, and trails) formally recognized and approved as part of the BLM’s transportation system.

Travel Management Areas—Polygons or delineated areas where a rational approach has been taken to classify areas as open, closed, or limited; and where a network of roads, trails, ways, and other routes that provide for public access and travel across the planning area are identified or designated. All designated travel routes within travel management areas should have a clearly identified need and purpose, as well as clearly defined activity types, modes of travel, and seasons or time frames for allowable access or other limitations (BLM Manual H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook).

Way—Roadlike feature used by vehicles having four or more wheels but not declared a road by the owner and which receives no maintenance to guarantee regular and continuous use.